(Washington, DC) – Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) announced his support for the health insurance reform package that will provide secure and stable health coverage regardless of job status, ensure Americans will never be denied care if they get sick, and extend coverage to those not well served by the current system. According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the package would expand coverage to 32 million Americans while cutting the deficit by $143 billion in the next ten years and by $1.2 trillion ten years after that. Information about the bill - including bill text, a detailed summary, and a timeline for implementation – is available at holt.house.gov. The House is expected to vote on the package Sunday night.

"For me, the debate about health insurance reform always has been about the families who struggle to secure the coverage they need. It's about the small business owners who face rising premiums. It's about the seniors who can't pay for their prescription drugs," Holt said. "In supporting reform of our broken health insurance system, I stand with the families, seniors, and small businesses who I represent and who will soon have greater control over their health care."

The legislation would provide millions of Americans with coverage they don't have, provide significant consumer protections to the hundreds of millions of Americans with private insurance, and provide improvements to Medicare by closing the prescription drug "doughnut hole" and providing free preventive care. The bill would benefit those with and without insurance by:

Establishing important consumer protections for all Americans. Insurers would be prohibited from excluding coverage or charging more based on pre-existing conditions like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, or pregnancy. Insurers also would be prohibited from dropping coverage if someone becomes sick and prohibited from setting annual or lifetime limits beyond which the insurer refuses to pay, leaving families facing bankruptcy. Insurance companies would have to spend more (at least 80 percent) of each premium dollar on actually providing healthcare.

Creating an insurance marketplace for those not well served by the system now. Those between jobs, employees of small businesses, or those who do not get coverage through their work would be able to purchase health insurance at group rates. All insurance plans in the marketplace would need to cover a comprehensive set of necessary services and follow all the consumer protection standards. Through competition and choice, coverage would be more affordable and accountable and would provide care better aligned with the best medical standards.

Strengthening health care for seniors. The package would strengthen Medicare in a number of

important ways, including emphasizing more primary and preventive care, eliminating the doughnut hole in the Medicare prescription drug benefit, reducing redundant tests or unnecessary procedures, and eliminating wasteful subsidies to insurance companies.

The health care reform package would lower health costs for families by increasing competition across all states through the new marketplace. It would reduce costs by promoting coordinated medical care to eliminate duplicative tests; by reducing waste, fraud, and abuse; and by switching from paper to electronic records. The bill would decrease costs by expanding research on which treatments work best for different patients, helping physicians and nurses provide effective medical care. Long term, the legislation would limit costs by shifting to a focus on health outcomes and rewarding physicians for treating the whole patient.

"Health care reform has been a long time coming – almost 100 years in the making. Yet, as soon as the President signs this into law, benefits will be felt immediately," Holt said. "Small businesses will be able to receive tax credits to purchase insurance, insurance companies will be banned from dropping coverage when someone gets sick, and seniors confronting the 'donut hole' will receive $250 to pay for prescription drugs."